

Mud-Bound Tie Abandoned By Referee



NO DECISION AFTER 90 MINUTES MORE

Samuels Equalises And A Third Replay Is Ordered

BY "CHILTERN"

Wycombe Wanderers 1, Bedford Town 1
(abandoned after 90 minutes)

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AFTER 90 energy-sapping minutes on Monday night referee Arthur Dimond scraped the mud off his boots, wiped his whistle, and explained to reporters: "It was impossible. The lads couldn't hold their feet and I couldn't see the lines."

Mr. Dimond was explaining why he had abandoned Wycombe Wanderers F.A. Cup second replay with Bedford at Loakes Park. The two sides had drawn three times in 300 minutes of do or die cup football in a battle for the right to meet Oxford United in the second round in January.

At 2 p.m. on Monday afternoon Wycombe's pitch was in reasonable condition. But by the 7.30 p.m. kick-off continual rain had turned the grassy slope of Loakes Park into a boggy arena more fitted for Chinese mud wrestlers than footballers.

One hundred minutes later 23 pairs of feet had churned the once well-rolled grass into a quagmire. And as the 22 players and Mr. Dimond lazed in their well-earned bath, Bedford manager, Ron Burgess told me: "The ref was right. He had no alternative but to call it off."

"DIFFICULT"

And Wycombe's manager Barry Darvill added: "Conditions were very difficult. I am rather thankful that no decision was reached on a pitch like that."

What a game it was! Bedford had rather the better of the play, and their forwards slugged away at Wycombe's solid defence for most of the game.

Even so, both sides had their chances, and Bedford's goal was a giveaway by goalkeeper John Maskell. Tricky Danny Paton somehow glided through five frantic defenders before shooting past the diving Maskell. The ball struck a post and bounced out only to stick in the mud. Then Maskell, thinking Paton was following up, suddenly threw out a fist in an attempt to put the ball over for a corner. Wycombe hearts sank as it slid into the goal.

Wycombe's goal was far more clear-cut. It came 10 minutes later when Keith Samuels headed Bates' accurate corner crisply past Collier. Collier thankfully gave a corner away in a good save to a Horseman effort after good work by Worley.

Wanderers took the honours for the first 10 minutes, but after

that their defence stood up gallantly to a real pounding from the professionals.

Once John Beck fly-kicked at a through ball, missed it, and Maskell made a great last ditch save at the feet of Fogg.

If Wycombe had the luck against them in the first two encounters with Bedford, they certainly didn't on Monday, and I make them fortunate to earn another replay. Bedford's forwards were on the rampage for most of the game, and several times it was only the ball sticking in the mud at the last minute that threw them off their stride.

Even so, Wanderers put up a magnificent performance, and thanks to their grimly determined defence, they live to fight yet again in this marathon cup saga.

Wycombe — J. Maskell; J. Beck, P. Roystone; B. Baker, I. Rundle, C. Gale; L. Worley, K. Samuels, P. Bates, T. Horseman, L. Merrick.

Bedford—A. Collier; P. Morgan, D. Skinn; G. Willis, M. Collins, N. Cooley; D. Sturrock, R. Paton, C. Riley, R. Fogg, M. Benning.